

REMARKS:

In the Office Action mailed on December 18, 2003, the Examiner objected to some of the drawings as not having proper sectional lines, objected to the abstract as being too long, objected to claims 1, 3, 4, 8, 12, 15, 17, and 26 because of a number of informalities, rejected claims 1-11, 14-25 and 28-31 under 35 U.S.C. section 102 (b) as being anticipated by Chaillot et al. (US 5,989,078), and rejected claims 12, 13, 26, and 27 under 35 U.S.C. section 103 (a) as being an unpatentable combination of Chaillot et al. (US 5,989,078) in view of Ito et al (US 5,630,738).

With this amendment sheet one of the drawings has been replaced with a corrected drawing, the abstract has been replaced with a new shortened abstract, and claims 1, 3, 4, 8, 12, 15, 17, and 26 have been amended. Claims 1-31 remain in this application.

Attached are two copies of sheet 1 of the drawings. One sheet has the changes highlighted and the other sheet is a clear copy of the drawings as amended which should replace the original sheet 1..

The abstract filed originally in the application should be replaced by the abstract appearing above. The above abstract is merely a shortened version of the abstract which was originally filed.

Claims 1, 3, 4, 12, 15, 17, and 26 have been amended to correct informalities in the claims elements.

Claims 1 and 15 have been further amended to include the limitation of the primary and arc discharging contacts being stamped from the same sidewall and held at opposite ends of the contact by that sidewall. None of the cited references have these limitations. The item 46 of Chaillot et al., called a arc discharging contact by the Examiner, extends from the front of the terminal wall and is not stamped from the wall nor is it held by the wall at two opposite ends. Item 27 of Chaillot et al., called a primary contact by the Examiner, is not stamped from the wall and also is not held at each opposite end by any wall. Since neither of these limitations are in the cited prior art, then the rejection under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) has been overcome.

Claims 1 and 15 have the further limitation of the sidewalls flexing in response of the insertion of the male terminal. None of the side walls in the cited references flex. As shown

in figures 3a and 3b of Chaillot et al., cantilevered contact blades 29 flex and the external wall 26 does not. As shown in figures 7a and 7b of Ito et al., resilient contact tongue 18 moves while the bottom wall 19 and ceiling wall 15 do not move. Therefore the rejection under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) has been further overcome.

Claims 4 and 17 add the further limitation of an aperture above and below the arc discharge contact. As stated in the specification of the subject application on page 6 lines 17 - 23, the stamp out openings or apertures 29a and 29b create a small bar of metal that has some degree of resiliency to flex against the sides of the male terminal. Also on page 7 lines 2 - 15 the edges of the apertures result in more arc discharges near the edges which will tend to concentrate the by products of the arc discharge in various location instead of spreading them at or near the point at which the male terminal first engages the arc discharge contacts. Neither of the cited references have apertures in the side walls above and below the arc discharging contact. Therefore, not only do claims 4 and 7 further distinguish over the cited references, but these references are clearly shown to not have the benefit of a flexible arc discharge bar nor the concentration of arcing at the edges of the bar so that the by products of arcing will not deteriorate the electrical engagement between the male and female terminals.

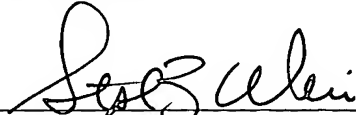
As discussed above, the claimed invention is not disclosed in any one of the references alone or in combination with one another. The Applicants believe, therefore, that all of the objections and rejections raised by the Examiner have been overcome. Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to allow all of the claims remaining in the application and to grant into a patent covering the claimed invention.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date: JANUARY 8, 2004

By: _____


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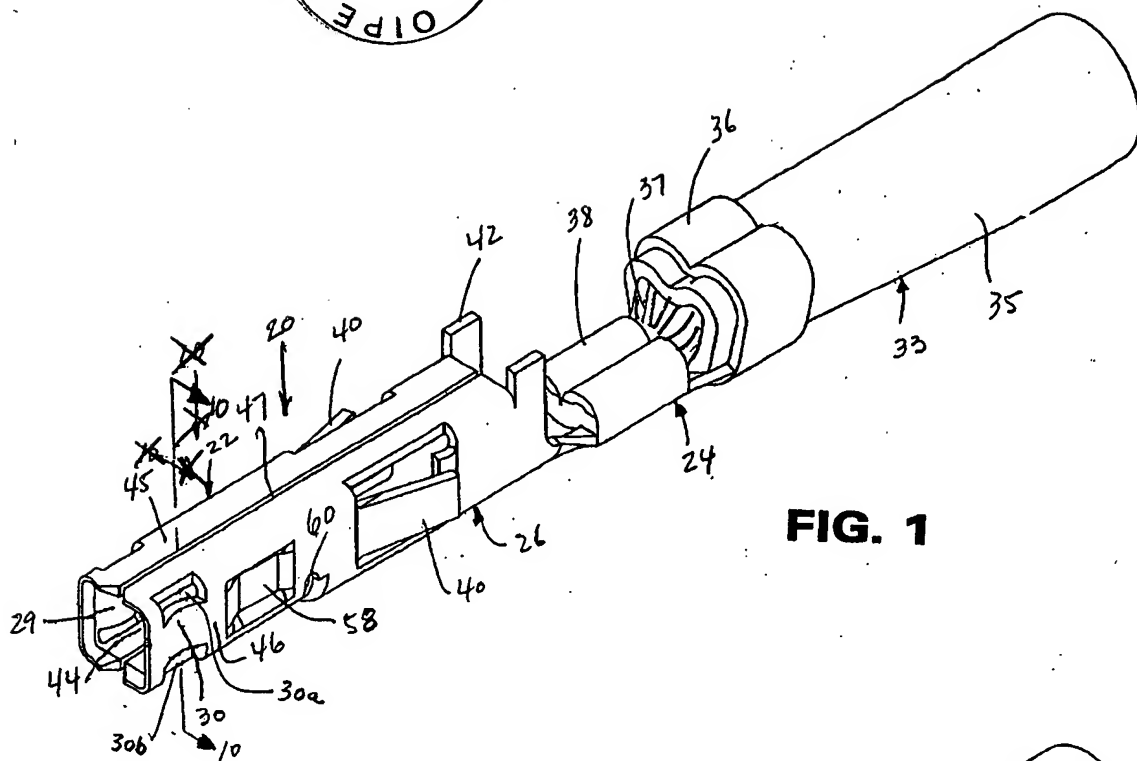


FIG. 1

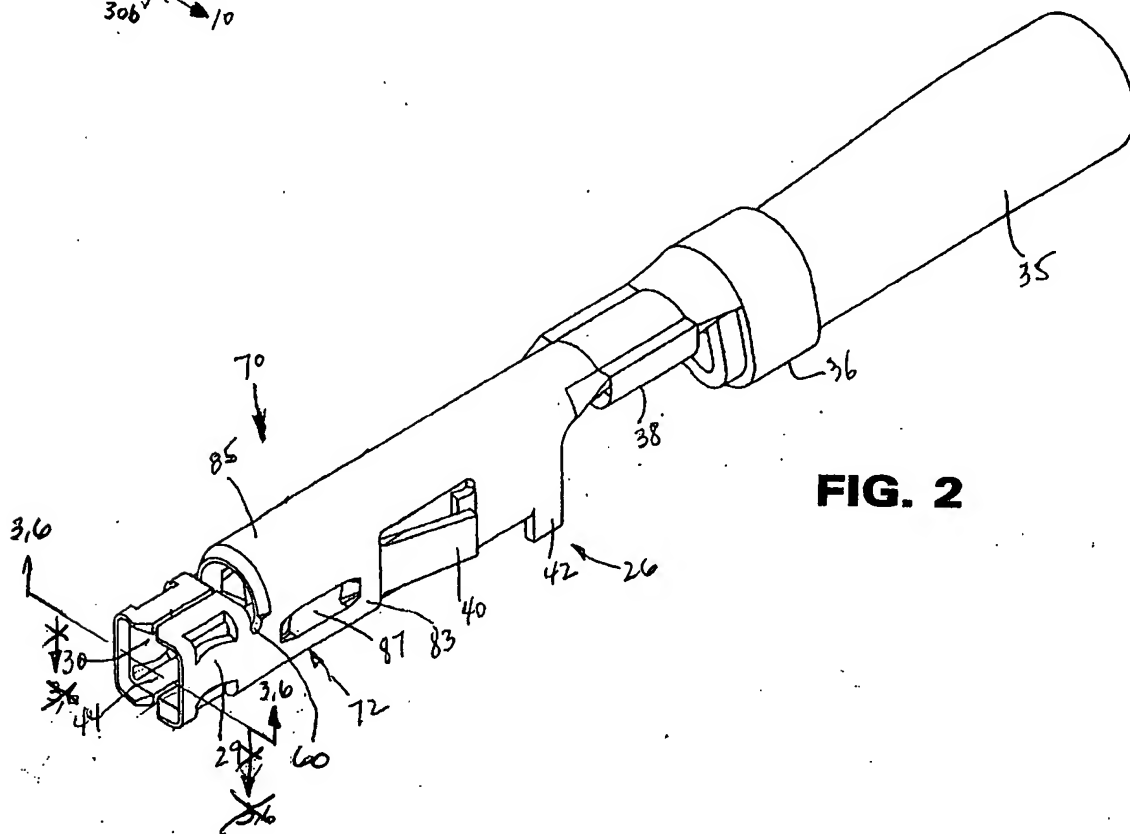


FIG. 2